

## AU-PAIR EMPLOYMENT

*Au-pair* programs are available to foreign students studying in France, male as well as female. An *au-pair* receives room, board and spending money in return for light housework, baby-sitting, and help at mealtimes. These programs are monitored by the French Ministry of Labor which has established the rules and requirements for *au-pair* work. For administrative purposes, an *au-pair* is designated as a stagiaire aide familiale.

### **Basic requirements:**

An *au-pair* must be at least 18 years of age and no more than 30. The student is expected to have a fair knowledge of, and to be studying, the French language. During the school year, a minimum stay of three months is required. The regular program length is normally one year, but may be extended to a maximum of 18 months. A student may stay with more than one family during the *au-pair* period, but the total stay cannot exceed 18 months. There are also summer *au-pair* programs of one to three months. In these cases, the requirement that the *au-pair* should be taking French courses is waived if the student has completed at least one year of college-level studies in French.

### **The Au-Pair's family (*famille d'accueil*):**

The objective of the *au-pair* program is to give the foreign student the opportunity to practice and perfect their French and to benefit materially and psychologically from their studies and their temporary stay in France by sharing in a French family's life. Consequently, foreign families in France and unmarried persons without children are usually not authorized to hire an *au-pair*. The family must provide room and board. The *au-pair* will normally share meals with the family members and, insofar as possible, be lodged in a private bedroom.

### **The Au-Pair's schedule:**

The daily work schedule should be arranged in advance between the family and the *au-pair* allowing the student enough time for his/her studies. Normally, the *au-pair* is not expected to work more than five hours a day. The family should give the *au-pair* one day off each week, one of which should be a Sunday. The *au-pair* should always have the opportunity to go to church even if Sunday is a working day.

### **Au-Pair visa requirements:**

American citizens coming to France to work as an *au-pair* must obtain the appropriate *au pair* visa in the U.S. from the French Consulate having jurisdiction over their place of residence. This requirement is mandatory: it is not possible to enter France as a 'tourist' and then change status to that of *au-pair*.

The classic *au-pair* (one who will be taking some French language and civilization courses while working for a French family) should arrange a work agreement or contract directly with a family, or through an *au-pair* organization (see list below,) and then apply to the nearest French Consulate for a *visa de long séjour* as a *stagiaire aide familiale*. A work contract approved by the French Ministry of Labor is a prerequisite for a visa. See the Embassy's information sheet on "Visa Requirements for France" for a list of the addresses of French consular offices in the United States. Americans who have come to France with a student visa and have obtained a residence permit and registered at a French university or school can obtain *au-pair* status after arrival in France. As in the case of the classic *au-pair*, the student *au-pair* will need to find a family and obtain the French Ministry of Labor's approval of the work contract.

### **Pocket Money:**

The *au-pair* should receive approximately 270 euros per month in pocket money (as opposed to wages as such.) Some families provide their *au-pair* with a *carte orange* (a monthly pass valid for the Métro, buses, and suburban trains,) but they are not required to do so by Ministry of Labor regulations.

### **Social Security Coverage:**

The family must declare the *au-pair* as a *stagiaire aide familiale* to the French Social Security Administration (U.R.S.S.A.F.) and make the monthly contribution (*côtisation*.) in order for the *au-pair* to receive social security benefits in the event of illness or accidents. The monthly contribution, paid by the host family, is approximately 144 euros.

### **Approval of work contract:**

The French family or *au-pair* organization can obtain contract forms in triplicate from the Foreign Labor Branch of the Ministry of Labor office (Direction Départementale du Travail et de la Main d'Oeuvre) at the Préfecture in each of the 95 French departments. In Paris, this address is: Service de la Main d'Oeuvre Etrangère, 127 Boulevard de la Villette, 75010 Paris / Tel: 01 44 84 42 86/41-00 Métro: Jaurès or Stalingrad

The completed contract forms, signed by both parties, must be returned to the Service de la Main d'Oeuvre Etrangère accompanied by:

- 1) A medical certificate from a doctor who has examined the *au-pair* within the last three months, along with a French translation and;
- 2) The student card (if applying as a student already resident in France) or transcript or other evidence of student status in the United States (if applying for the visa in the United States as a regular *au-pair*.) The Service de la Main d'Oeuvre Etrangère will approve and stamp the contract form, returning two copies to the family or organization, which must provide one copy to the *au-pair* for use in applying for the visa and for residence and work permits.

## **Residence and work permits:**

After arrival in France with a visa, the classic *au-pair* must apply within eight days for a residence permit. (See information sheet on "Residence Permits (*Cartes de séjour*) for France.")

Along with the work contract, the classic *au-pair* must present evidence of registration in a French language school (Alliance Française, the Sorbonne, etc.). Evening classes are not acceptable. After obtaining a *carte de séjour*, the *au-pair* returns to the Service de la Main d'Oeuvre Etrangère to receive a temporary work permit (*autorisation provisoire de travail*.) The permit is normally valid for six months, and is renewable.

**Some students and au-pairs who have acquired a long-stay visa for under one year are exempted from obtaining a “carte de séjour” (residence permit) as long as their visas are currently valid. This exemption will be written on the visa.**

## **Au-Pair organizations:**

The organizations listed below assist students in finding *au-pair* employment. While the Embassy cannot assume any responsibility for the competence and integrity of these organizations, it has verified that all of those on this list are prepared to assist Americans. They usually charge a registration fee for their services.

- Accueil Familial des Jeunes, 23 rue du
- Cherche-Midi, 75006 Paris; Tel: 01 42 22 50 34
- ACIS.JF., 63 rue Monsieur-le-Prince, 75006 Paris; Tel: 01 44 32 12 90 / 91
- L'Alliance Française, 101 Boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris; Tel: 01 42 84 90 00
- L'Arche, 39 rue Broca, 75005; Tel: 01 42 17 10 30
- Institut Catholique, 21 rue d'Assas, 75006 Paris; Tel: 01 45 48 31 70

